

[View this email in your browser](#)

Dedicated to Democratic Ideals, a progressive and politically stable Pakistan, and strong US-Pakistan relations.  
[induspk.org](http://induspk.org)



Join Our Newsletter

 Forward To A Friend

# An American's Letter to Sabika Sheikh



**Michael Kugelman**

Michael Kugelman is a member of the INDUS Academia & Scholars Panel.

Dear Sabika,

It's been several days since the school shooting at Santa Fe High School in Texas, where you, a 17-year-old Pakistani exchange student, [were among the 10 victims](#).

Since then, I've learned a lot about you from media reports and the moving testimonials from your family and friends.

You were blessed with many admirable qualities, but what particularly stands out is your pure and unadulterated optimism.

Indeed, in a deeply troubled world where many nightmare scenarios have come true, you still

dared to dream of better things.

In a speech you made at a retreat for foreign exchange students in North Carolina earlier this year, [you said](#) you "prayed every night to wake up to a world of peace."

At a time when the US global image is suffering beyond belief, you still saw the good in America. Your father recalled that before you arrived here, you studied US history ["to learn from the best."](#)

You believed America provided a [safe and special space](#) to receive an education. You wanted to be a diplomat and [hoped to help](#) improve US-Pakistan relations.

You were from Karachi, where terrorism and other violence haven't been as frequent as in earlier years. And you lived far from Pakistan's most conflicted regions in the west and north.

Still, given your country's many afflictions — including the extremism that you [reportedly sought to escape](#) by studying in America — you had good reason to come of age too quickly.

Indeed, in Pakistan and beyond, so many conflict-scarred, disease-ravaged, and prejudice-victimised young people — and many more traumatised by the travails of their global peers thanks to the powerful vehicle of social media — have had to grow up way too fast.

In short, it wouldn't have been surprising if you'd become jaded.

Or at least a bit cynical.

But you didn't. You were an optimist to the core.

Until the moment you died.

How cruel and tragic that the country you so admired, and that gave you so much hope, didn't only let you down. It killed you.

Now you are one more victim of a sickening American gun culture that has literally been the death of so many people in this country—again and again and again and again.

I'm also struck by something else: your death has taken a powerful perception harboured by many Americans and turned it firmly on its head.

Nearly eight years ago, a *Newsweek* headline [infamously declared](#) Pakistan to be the most dangerous country in the world. Today, many Americans — who often fixate on the fate of Daniel Pearl and the discovery of Osama Bin Laden — continue to view Pakistan as a dangerous place, and especially for Americans.

And yet then there was you: a Pakistani student gunned down at school — by an American terrorist. In America.

It's as if the lens through which Americans view Pakistan has been inverted, bringing into focus an ugly and deadly dimension of the United States that many here are still unwilling to fully acknowledge.

This underside of America is all too real. It makes your determination to focus on America's better side all the more admirable.

Your father said he hopes your death will finally prompt America to reform its gun laws.

Sadly, that's not in the offing. Dozens of previous school shootings — including one in 2012 [that killed 20 six- and seven-year-olds](#) — haven't prompted change.

Neither has the most galvanising gun control movement in US history, spearheaded by survivors of the Parkland, Florida school shooting in February.

We've already witnessed a familiar charade since the Santa Fe shooting: US political leaders [blaming everything](#)— video games, not enough religion, too much drug abuse, even too many doors in schools — but guns for school massacres.

Indeed, it's hard to find any silver linings. But it's worth trying, if only to honour someone who seemed to have an endless repository of hope.

Here's one. Even in your much-too-short life, you achieved your goal of becoming a diplomat.

Your first and only overseas posting was in Texas, where you served as a cultural ambassador — a well-deserved informal status for effective foreign exchange students like you.

How tragic that in the end you brought the US and Pakistan together in grief, not goodwill.

Here's one more silver lining: you offer a resounding reminder that young people are Pakistan's greatest asset. In a country where two thirds of the population is under 30, and where the median age is 23, there are many more Sabikas: young, smart, suffused with hope, and determined to make Pakistan, and the world, a better place.

Here's hoping we hear more about Pakistan's other Sabikas in the coming years — not because of their tragic deaths, but because of their inspiring acts in life.

And I'd like to think you'll be pulling for them all.

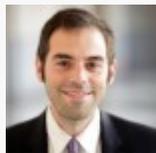
--

[Originally published in Dawn.](#)

Michael Kugelman is the Deputy Director of the Asia Program and Senior Associate for South Asia at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

---

# Uproar over diplomat's car crash strains ties between US and Pakistan



**Michael Kugelman**

Michael Kugelman is a member of the INDUS Academia & Scholars Panel.

Pakistan has relented and allowed a US diplomat accused of running a red light and killing a motorcycle driver to leave the country but the incident has already strained ties between the two uneasy allies.

The move comes after Colonel Joseph Emanuel Hall, a US military attaché in Islamabad, was barred from leaving on a US military plane that arrived Saturday.

Pakistan had initially insisted that he couldn't leave because he was the subject of a criminal investigation but Washington argued that Hall's diplomatic immunity shielded him from legal

action in Pakistan.

Washington's refusal to give ground has further deepened tensions in a relationship that's been on a collision course ever since the Trump administration announced its [South Asia strategy last August](#).

### **New strategy**

That strategy vowed to compel Pakistan to crack down on terrorists on its soil that target Americans in Afghanistan.

It also called on India, Pakistan's bitter rival, to step up its role in Afghanistan — thereby playing to longstanding Pakistani fears of India deepening its footprint on Pakistan's western flank.

US-Pakistan relations took another tumble in January, when President Donald Trump rang in the [New Year with a truculent tweet that angrily accused Pakistan of "giving us nothing but lies and deceit."](#) Several days later, the [US froze all security aid to Pakistan](#).

However, despite this turmoil, the relationship hasn't exactly ground to a halt. High-level diplomacy, [including a March visit to Islamabad by Alice Wells](#), a top State Department South Asia official, has continued.

One reason the relationship hasn't taken a bigger plunge is that the Trump administration hasn't followed through with major punitive measures—from expanding drone strikes and sanctioning Pakistani officials with ties to terrorists to designating Pakistan as a state sponsor of terror—that analysts and administration officials themselves in past months suggested could be in the offing.

The White House worries that taking such harsh steps could prompt Pakistan to retaliate by shutting down supply lines on its soil used by the US military in Afghanistan.

Shutting down those routes would require America to use more costly and circuitous alternative routes in Central Asia. Additionally, given the poor state of US-Russia relations, as well as Moscow's deepening relations with Islamabad, Russia may try to hamper US access to them.

### **Hands tied**

In effect, the Trump administration can't wield a bigger stick in Pakistan because it knows its hands are tied.

Instead, over the course of 2018, the United States has targeted Pakistan with more modest moves less likely to trigger a supply lines shutdown. Indeed, given that the supply lines are Pakistan's most powerful tool of leverage, Islamabad will hold its fire as long as it can—and close them down only if provoked in a really big way.

The more modest measures are a far and weaker cry from the muscular moves threatened by the administration earlier.

They include, in February, Washington's introduction of a motion at the Financial Action Task Force, a global forum, [to sanction Pakistan for failing to curb terrorist financing](#). More recently, the US government [this month imposed restrictions on the movements](#) of Pakistani diplomats in America.

Perhaps most dramatically, Washington [this month blocked a request by Pakistan](#) at the United Nations Security Council to designate Omar Khorasani, an especially vicious Pakistani militant, as a terrorist.

Last year, Washington targeted Khorasani in a drone strike in Afghanistan (which he apparently survived, despite initial reports that he died).

In 2016, it formally designated his organization, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, [as a terrorist outfit](#). The fact that a self-proclaimed tough-on-terror Trump administration refused to recognize Khorasani as a UN-designated terrorist speaks volumes about the White House's determination to undermine Pakistan.

Islamabad has retaliated to one of these moves. It imposed its own restrictions on US diplomats, [including one that forbids them from using vehicles with tinted glass.](#) The privacy and security implications of such a move could be unnerving to Washington.

US officials may not be taking the harshest possible measures in Pakistan, but they're still provoking hard and hurting feelings there. Khorasani [has been implicated in dozens of attacks across Pakistan;](#) few terrorists have as much Pakistani blood on their hands.

Understandably, Pakistani officialdom and the Pakistani public alike are incensed about Washington's refusal to sanction him at the UN.

Ultimately, Washington's policy amounts to pressuring Pakistan with pinpricks. It's a policy unlikely to achieve its main aim, which is getting Pakistan to target the terrorists on its soil that are killing Americans in Afghanistan. But it's guaranteed to keep US-Pakistan relations icy for the foreseeable future.

--

[Originally published in CNN.](#)



Like INDUS on Facebook



Follow INDUS on Twitter

---

## OUR FOCUS

### Youth Leadership Development

Creating campus-based, strictly nonpolitical Student Government Associations that offer Executive, Legislative & Judiciary functions experience within the campus environment. Elected student representatives, as Members of Parliament, Senators and judges manage all aspects of student affairs, in conjunction with campus administration.

### Pakistan Civil Liberties Union

Civil liberties are personal guarantees and freedoms that the government cannot abridge, either by law or by judicial interpretation. However in today's Pakistan, rising violence, intolerance, weak rule of law, endemic corruption, lack of social and economic justice, and religious freedom, social exclusion of the vulnerable and the marginalized are a common phenomenon that the people of Pakistan face on a daily basis. Pakistan Civil Liberties Union – PCLU is a watchdog organization intended to combat all the above issues at every cross section of our society.

### Community Integration & Civic Promotion

When successful, the processes of community integration and civic promotion begin with the individual and, alongside support from Federal, State, and municipal programs, advance collectively, often through socialization with informal groups and professional and cultural associations. However, due to regional, organizational, and programmatic differences, the catalytic potential of civil society organizations is underutilized. Partnerships with local, regional, and national civil society organizations will advance community integration, promote the concept of citizenship, and highlight pathways to achieve the "American Dream."

## Policy Research – As It Happens

Campus-based political and social sciences research. Graduate Student and Faculty focusing on policy issues for possible social, cultural, and political reform, followed by advocacy action and awareness creation by the same researchers for the purposes of legislative reform as appropriate.

## Cultivating Early Awareness

Aimed at increasing youngsters' awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and building a national bond at a very impressionable age, leading to real benefits to the nation in evolving future leadership.

# MEDIA REVIEW

## What Trump's Pullout From The Iran Deal Means For South Asia

Michael Kugelman

As a result of the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, India will have to balance economic relations with Tehran and deepening ties with Washington. India's challenge benefits Pakistan. And Pakistan's deteriorating relationship with the U.S. means it will be less concerned about flouting new U.S. sanctions. However, Pakistan could get caught in the middle of the Saudi Arabia-Iran rivalry. And Iran could deepen its support of the Taliban. [[Bloomberg](#)]

## New Indian Dam Threatens to Parch Pakistan

India inaugurated Kishanganga hydroelectric plant, intensifying a dispute between India and Pakistan over the 58-year old Indus Waters Treaty. The World Bank is trying to help resolve the conflict, but there are other infrastructural challenges and environmental trends that will need to be dealt with on a large scale to avoid potential catastrophes. [[Asia Times](#)]

## Mohammed bin Salman and the gold rush of singularity

Bill Law

Masayoshi Son, Chairman of SoftBank, convinced the Saudi Arabian ruler to invest \$45 billion in singularity – the point at which artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence, leading to the disruption of every industry and most professions. "But back in the real world of Saudi Arabia, there remains a shortage of affordable housing...the pursuit of Singularity will come at a cost to more mundane and practical considerations." [[Al Jazeera](#)]

## US DoD 1999 Forecast: "Pakistan Disappears by 2015"

Riaz Haq

Asia 2025, a US Defense Department Study produced in summer of 1999, forecast that Pakistan would "disappear" as an independent state by 2015. It further forecast that Pakistan would become part of a "South Asian Superstate" controlled by India as a "regional hegemon." [[Haq's Musings](#)]

## Pakistani Politicians Change Election Law to Escape Accountability

Riaz Haq

Pakistan Elections Act 2017 passed by the National Assembly has removed the requirements for key disclosures relating to the ownership of assets, income taxes paid or owed, bank loan defaults, foreign residency (iqama) and educational qualifications of the candidates for national and provincial legislatures in the upcoming elections. This came in October 2017 after several members of the national parliament were caught lying and subsequently disqualified by the courts under

Articles 62 and 63 of Pakistan's constitution. Those disqualified include top politicians like former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of the PMLN party and PTI leader and parliamentarian Jahangir Tareen. [[Haq's Musings](#)]

### **Pakistan Among World's Top 10 Tax Losing Countries**

Riaz Haq

According to UN World Institute for Development Economics, Pakistan ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of tax revenue losses due to corporate tax avoidance and ties for first, or worst, in terms of tax revenue lost as a percentage of GDP – 3.5 percent. The problem starts at the top; many politicians, ministers, and party leaders do not bother to file tax returns or pay taxes. [[Haq's Musings](#)]

---

*Registration and tax-deductible donations can be made through our website: [induspk.org](http://induspk.org)*

*Copyright © 2018 INDUS - Mobilizing People's Power, All rights reserved.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#)   [update subscription preferences](#)

The MailChimp logo is displayed in a white, cursive font within a dark grey rounded rectangular box.